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“CHRIST’S MIRROR IMAGE” – ‘Demonstration Stage

“CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK TWELVE – NURTURE”

(Luke 13:34)

Intro ... This morning we come to the **Twelfth** of the Twelve Core Components – the Twelve Building Blocks - of the Christ-Life. Next week we will no doubt review them all.

Here then is today’s twelfth and final one ...

CHRIST-LIFE BUILDING BLOCK TWELVE ... NURTURE

Here are today’s secondary descriptors:

TEACH – TRAIN - CULTIVATE – ENCOURAGE

Teach – putting **truth** into someone

Train – developing **skill** in someone

Cultivate – removing **hindrances** from someone

Encourage – stimulating **courage** in someone

What a marvelous ability to possess – the ability (and the desire) to help ‘form’ another human being. What a privilege to see someone progress toward true and full faith in Jesus Christ – to work ‘hand in hand’ with ‘Pneuma’ Himself in the shaping of their lives!

Consider with me ...

TODAY’S COMPELLING SCRIPTURAL IMAGE ...

THE MOTHER HEN!

“O Jerusalem ... how often I have longed to gather your **CHILDREN** together as a **HEN** gathers her

CHICKS under her **WINGS!**

(Luke 13:34)

So here we see one way Jesus – our 'model' of 'perfected humanity' - viewed himself ... as a 'Mother Hen' who would gather her chicks and watch over them until they were grown and able to fend for themselves.

Jesus saw himself as a 'nurturer' ... a maturity-producer ... as one who gave himself to the development of those under his care.

Let's watch him do it and learn from His Example ...

1. JESUS 'NURTURED' HIS DISCIPLES ...

*** He TAUGHT them – Put Truth into them!**

Pretty much everything that Jesus was about was new to them ... They were as amazed and at times bewildered by what He said as everyone else was.

There was much 'teaching' that needed to be done if they were to be ready to carry on the task He would leave with them.

He never assumed that they could just 'watch him' and figure it out.

Check out these **four scriptures** ...

"When he was alone with his disciples, he **EXPLAINED** everything" - Mark 4:34

(This had to do with the meaning of the many parables he used.)

"You call me **TEACHER**... and so I am." - John 13:13

(There was no doubt about His understanding of their need of instruction.)

"Do you still not **UNDERSTAND**?" – Matthew 16:9

(Understanding was slow in coming for the Disciples – Jesus could have given in to frustration but he continued on by helping them 'see' what he was saying ...

When He said 'bread/yeast' he was talking about the false teaching the Pharisees were 'baking up'.)

"He **EXPLAINED** ... what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." - Luke 24:27

(Here was the Master Tutorial given by the Master Teacher Himself – Walked them through the entire Old Testament Scriptures.)

Jesus was a **Master Teacher** – He filled His Disciples with Truth!

*** He TRAINED them – Developed Skills in them!**

'Knowing' the truth and 'doing' the truth are two very different things. Jesus equipped them to actually 'do' ministry. He prepared them to function effectively and fruitfully in ministry.

Check out these **three scriptures** ...

"He **SENT** them out ... and gave them authority over evil spirits."- Mark 6:7

(He gave them authority – 'Devil, they represent me – you must treat them just as if they were me' ...Today we call this 'on-the-job' training or even 'internship'.)

"Now that you **KNOW** these things, you will be blessed if you **DO** them." – John 13:17

(He made clear to them that the only value in being able to say "I know something" is so you can then go forth and 'Do something'.)

"**AS** I have loved you, **YOU ARE** to love one another."- John 13:34

(Jesus knew that the best way to develop a ministry skill is to see a 'skilled minister in action'. This the Disciples had had the privilege of doing. And now Jesus tells them to 'Go and do likewise'.)

Jesus was a **Master Trainer** – He developed His Disciples' Skills!

*** He CULTIVATED them- Removed Hindrances from them!**

Like a gardener working the ground to eliminate 'weeds' so the nurturer works in the minds and hearts of those He nurtures to removes the things that get in the way of their growth – the things that would rob them of necessary nutrients.

Check out now these **three scriptures** ...

"Who do **PEOPLE** say the Son of Man is?" – Matthew 16:13

(Seldom do 'people' in and of themselves 'get it right' and yet people's impressions and opinions can certainly 'get in the way'.)

"This was revealed to you by my **FATHER** in heaven" – Matthew 16:17

(Having removed the 'weedy' thoughts and opinions of men, there was now room for genuine spiritual insight to take root and it did as Peter declared, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God".)

"Jesus turned to Peter and said 'Get behind me, **SATAN**'"- Matthew 16:23

(Sometimes the 'weeds' that need to be cultivated away are of our own devising. We 'Put two and two together' and get something other than 'four'.)

Jesus was a **Master Cultivator** – He 'weeded' a lot of 'stuff' out of His Disciples!

* **He ENCOURAGED them – Stimulated Courage in them!**

Knowing the truth and developing skills in ministry and having '*hindrances*' regularly cultivated out of our lives does not necessary '*thrust a person into consistent service for Christ*'. Apprehension and fearfulness will keep many a '*ministry door*' tightly shut. Frequently, courage must be found before we can open that door and step confidently through it. This Jesus knew well.

Check out these **two scriptures** ...

"ANYONE who has faith in me WILL DO what I have been doing."-John 14:12

(Jesus didn't say '*might do*' or even '*can do*'; He said '*will do*' ... This is the kind of courage-stimulating statement that could turn even "*Doubting Thomas*" into a dynamic witness. Tradition tells us that Thomas took the gospel to India.)

"You SHALL receive POWER when the Spirit comes upon you and you SHALL be my WITNESSES ..." – Acts 1:8

(And if any of them wondered how their '*faith in Christ*' could lead to such accomplishments, Jesus pointed out to them the ultimate object of such faith ... **believe** in the **ONE** that would be sent. Power to serve Christ and to witness for Him would be brought by the Holy Spirit who would soon come upon them. Such words surely encouraged them greatly and stimulated great courage in them.

Jesus was a **Master Encourager** – He stimulated great courage in His Disciples!

So what about that '**Spirit**' that Jesus would send into the world?
Would He continue this '*Nurturing Ministry*' of Jesus?

Well ... Let's check it out ...

Notice that even as Jesus '*nurtured*' His own Disciples so ...

2. HIS SPIRIT NURTURES US ...

All that Jesus was to His Disciples while He was on the earth, '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit – would be to them and to all subsequent believers.

Notice how this '*Nurturing Ministry of Jesus*' would continue ...

"He will GUIDE you into all truth"- John 16:13

(The Holy Spirit would take up the teaching ministry of Christ and open their minds and hearts to spiritual truth. Initially He guided some of those early Disciples to put on paper the words that would make up the New Testament Scriptures. He granted them insights that could only be received following the completion of Jesus' earthly ministry. He taught them and excited them with gospel truths.)

“He will be **with** you forever”- John 14:16

(He would be the day in, day out presence of God in their lives. He would be the ONE who would observe their struggles and their successes. He would ‘walk them into and through’ one life circumstance after another. He would prepare them and empower them for godly living in this fallen world. He would be their mentor – their trainer.)

“He will **REMINDE** you of everything I have said.”- John 14:26

(This is a way of saying ‘He will keep your minds on the things that I have said’. He will chide you when your minds start focusing on other things – on the opinions of men or even on your own. He will help you ‘weed out’ the stuff that doesn’t belong in your life – the stuff that clutters up your life and causes you to stumble.)

“And we are **BEING TRANSFORMED** with ever-increasing glory which comes from ... the Spirit.” – 2 Corinthians 3:18

(Now that’s an announcement designed to encourage our hearts – to stimulate real courage for the living of the Christ-Like life in this world of ours. The Spirit has come upon us – in fact, entered into us at the moment of our Spiritual Birth. He, the Almighty God Himself, has taken up residence within us and is actively working to accomplish the Divine Plan of making Christ the *First-Born of Many Brothers!*)

Without a doubt ...

All that Jesus was to His Earthly Disciples, the Holy Spirit has continued. He is the ONE today who would gather us all like ‘A mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings’ and there in that ‘protected environment’ He would teach us and train us and cultivate us and encourage us. Feel His Nurturing Presence!

And now **one last thing** ... an incredibly important thing ... the thing toward which the first two things point ...

3. WE ARE TO NURTURE ONE ANOTHER ...

This is a key part of the Christ-Life that ‘Pneuma’ would create within each of us!

Check out these Four Scriptures ...

“By this time you ought to be **TEACHERS**” – Hebrews 5:12

(This is the writer to the Hebrews expressing a bit of exasperation that those to whom he writes are experiencing a ‘delayed development’ with regard to their growth in grace. He says that though they ‘ought’ to be capable of teaching others, they are in need of being ‘taught the basics all over again’. Something was definitely wrong. To use our current terminology, we would say that this situation should serve as a bright ‘red flag’ indicating that they are not ‘Keeping in step with Pneuma’. The expectation is that all believers have a teaching role to someone.)

“Be an **EXAMPLE** of the believer” – 1 TIMOTHY 4:12

(Here the Apostle Paul points out to Timothy that modeling the Christian Life is the key to mentoring someone in the Christian Life. People who have ‘seen you do it’ are more open to hear you talk about ‘them doing it’.

“If someone is caught in a sin ... **RESTORE** him gently” – Galatians 6:1

‘Weeds’ do invade the garden – Sin does occasionally overcome Born-Again People. The task of cultivation – helping to remove those ‘weeds’ and overcome that sin – is an important part of the Christ-Life. Notice that this task is to be done gently. Better to ‘Hand-Weed’ than to use a tractor!

“**ENCOURAGE** one another daily” – Hebrews 3:13

(Wow ... isn't once a week on Sunday enough? Tell me, have you ever noticed that ‘Wonderful Sundays’ sometimes turn into ‘Horrible Mondays’?

It can seem like next Sunday is a long way away.

Of course, that is why we encourage you all to be in a *Sonlife* Cell Group and why we have a *Sonlife* Prayer Network – these are both designed to ‘keep us in touch’ with one another.)

‘Nurture-based contact’ is essential if we are to experience the fullness of the Christ-Life. I’m sure the Spirit’s ‘**Goal**’ is for every believer to encourage some other believer every day and to receive encouragement from some other believer every day.

And now for some Closing Questions:

How high on your list of priorities is ‘nurture’? Who has God sent to nurture you and who has God sent you to nurture? How is it going?

Suggestion: Choose a ‘Nurture Buddy’ - Commit to calling that person every day and discussing the ‘Nudge from Pneuma’ that you have just read. See what transpires over a 31 day period. There’s someone that I have been doing that with since May – nearly 6 months. Some most unexpected but wonderful things have happened to us both.

Final Thought ...

BETTER PEOPLE are the **LEGACY** of those who know how to **NURTURE**.
BITTER PEOPLE are too often the **LEGACY** of those who **DON'T!**